A REPORT PREPARED BY EUGENE B. KOGAN

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a report prepared by Eugene B. Kogan on the role of Congress in the implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Mr. Kogan is the John Kenneth Galbraith Fellow at the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). The report is entitled The War Congress: Shouldering the Responsibilities of A U.S. Global Role.

Mr. Kogan's report is particularly timely in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the U.S. intervention in Iraq. The report focuses on the role of Congress in these two seminal events and its abdication of effective oversight over the Bush administration's foreign policy decisions.

Mr. Kogan states in the report: ''The lack of congressional oversight over the Bush Administration's foreign policy can compromise the ability of the United States to build a more secure world. Accountability is eroded in wartime, and the war on terrorism is not any different, except that it will shape America's world role for the next half a century or more. In this critical period of U.S. history, it is important for Congress to exercise its Constitutional responsibility by holding the Executive Branch accountable for its foreign policy decisions.''

Congress plays a vital role in the formulation of our Nation's foreign policy. I commend Mr. Kogan's report to my colleagues as they consider the future congressional role in the war on terrorism and U.S. intervention in Iraq.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, this bill does not deserve to pass and I certainly will not vote for it.

That's not because I think all is well with the budget—far from it. Even before the hurricane winds and waves arrived and the levees broke, the Federal budget was already on a dangerous course marked by tidal waves of red ink and towering piles of debt. Since 2001, the budget surplus that President Clinton and a Republican Congress bequeathed President Bush had been erased and our country was now in debt to the tune of $8 trillion, or $25,000 for every American man, woman and child.

And then, as they brought death and destruction, Katrina and Rita delivered another blow to the Federal budget—and sounded a wake-up call about the fiscal and economic risks we have been running. I had hoped that the result might be recognition by both the Bush Administration and Congress that now we need to face hard reality and not continue with budget policies based on defying the laws of fiscal gravity. It's about time. But this bill—which would implement part of an overall Republican budget—goes in exactly the wrong direction.

As it comes to the floor, the bill would cut more than $50 billion over 5 years from a wide variety of programs—not because they are no longer needed and not because they are wasteful, but because the Republican leadership has decided the Americans served by these programs must sacrifice in order to help offset the cost of over $106 billion in tax cuts. And, after imposing these penalties on millions of America, the overall plan—service cuts for many Americans, tax cuts for relatively few—will not result in a balanced budget, but even bigger deficits and more delay in correcting our fiscal course.

In short, the Republican prescription for our budget problems is a toxic compound of misguided priorities and fiscal irresponsibility—in other words, more of the same mistakes as before, except worse.

And it's not like there aren't better ways to approach our budgetary problems.

For example, there is H.R. 3966, the Stimulating Leadership In Cutting Expenditures (or ''SLICE'') Act, a bill I introduced last month that is cosponsored by Members on both sides of the aisle and endorsed by the American Conservative Union, Americans for Tax Reform, Citizens Against Government Waste, Freedom Works, the Small Business Enterprise Council, and the National Taxpayers Union.

Its purpose is to promote Presidential leadership and Congressional accountability on proposals to reduce other spending in order to offset the costs of responding to the recent natural disasters.

Toward that end, it would authorize the President to identify specific items of Federal spending that he thinks should be cut and would require Congress to vote on each of those items. It would apply not only to regular appropriations, but also to the transportation bill that was passed and signed into law earlier this year. In each case, if the president proposes a cut, Congress would have to vote on it—we could not ignore the proposal, as can be done under current law—and if a majority approved the cut, it would take effect.

As our budget situation has grown worse, there has been a lot of talk about ''earmarks,'' meaning funding allocations initially proposed by Members of Congress rather than by the Administration. Some people are opposed to all earmarks—but I am not one of them. I think Members of Congress know the needs of their communities, and that Congress as a whole can and should exercise its judgment on how tax dollars are to be spent. So, I have sought earmarks for various items that have benefited Colorado and I will continue to do so. But I know—everyone knows—that some earmarks might not be approved if they were considered separately, because they would be seen as unnecessary, inappropriate, or excessive.

Dealing with that problem requires leadership and accountability. The SLICE bill would promote both, and by requiring us to focus on individual spending items it would make it possible to weigh the relative costs and benefits of each. But the Republican leadership has rejected that approach. Instead, they are insisting on bringing up this omnibus bill without allowing the House to even consider any amendments—except ones they decide they must make in order to pass it with only votes by Republican Members.

That is the wrong approach, and the bill is the wrong result—for the whole country, and particularly for Colorado and the West.

The bill is especially bad for Colorado because of some parts of it—developed by the Resources Committee—will directly affect our State. For example, there is the part that deals with oil shale.

Oil shale has great potential as an energy source, so it's an important part of our energy policy. And it's important to the taxpayers, who own most of it. They have an interest in what return they will get for this resource. But it's particularly important for Colorado, because our State has some of the most important deposits of oil shale, and Coloradans—particularly those on the Western Slope—will be directly affected by its development.

A new report from the Rand Corporation spells out the great benefits that can come from developing oil shale. But it also makes clear it's important for the development to happen in the right way. The report says oil shale development will have significant effects, not just on the land but also on air quality and on both the quality and quantity of our very limited water supplies. And it says what Coloradans know already—large-scale oil shale development will bring significant population growth and is likely to put stress on the ability of local communities to provide needed services.

In short, the report reminds us how much Colorado and our neighbors had at stake when Congress debated the oil shale provisions of the new Energy Policy Act that's been on the books for just over 2 months now. And while there are lots of things in that law I don't like, I think the parts dealing with oil shale are appropriate and deserve a chance to work before we rush to change them. But this legislation would tear up that part of the new law and replace it with provisions that not only would be bad public policy but would be a direct threat to Colorado.

That's why in the Resources Committee I offered an amendment that would have revised the oil shale sections in several important ways. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership of the committee opposed any changes to those sections, and my amendment was defeated.

What is the significance of that? Well, to begin with, current law says the Interior department has to consult with the Governor of Colorado and other relevant States, as well as with local governments and other interested parties, before going ahead with large-scale oil shale leasing The bill repeals that requirement for consultation. My amendment would have retained it.

Similarly, current law permits an orderly, measured program for oil shale development. But this bill would mandate a massive development program on a crash basis. It says Interior must lease a minimum of 35% of the oil shale lands in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming within just a one-year period. It's not clear if this means 35% of the three-state total or 35% of the oil-shale lands in each state. Either way, it's a requirement for a fast and massive commercial leasing program:

The Interior Department says there are about 16,000 square miles of oil shale lands in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming combined. That's more than 10 million acres, and about 72% of that is federal land. So, even if the intent is to require leasing 35% of the three-